

SUMMER TOWN MEETING

August 2, 2005

UPDATES ON THE MAIN STREET SCHOOL AND MARCONI WIRELESS RECEIVING STATION SITE

Main Street School

At the last two summer town Meetings we have reported to you the efforts to find a suitable use for the Main Street School property. So we thought it appropriate to update you on those efforts. After standing vacant for nearly nine years, the Main Street School's future has finally been decided. In December of last year a scaled back proposal was proposed at a special Town Meeting and Chatham voters approved the expenditure of \$6.0 Million for the purpose of creating a Community Center at the existing Main Street School.

The 1925 portion of the school building will be renovated to provide:

- office Space for the Recreation Department and Youth Services and two multipurpose rooms on the main floor;
- three multipurpose rooms, one with seating capacity for 200 on the second floor; and
- a fully functional recreation center in the basement.

The rear additions of the building will be demolished and a transition addition will be constructed to provide an entry foyer, restrooms for all floors and an elevator. Finally a gymnasium will be added to the rear of the transition addition.

At that same meeting, the voters also approved a measure to appropriate \$2 Million of community Preservation Funds (\$43,690.95 from Community Preservation Fund Historic Reserve; \$305,836.68 from Community Preservation Fund balance, \$250,472.37 from FY05 community Preservation fund Revenues and borrowings of \$1.5 Million against future Community Preservation Fund revenues) to preserve the 1925 portion of the Main Street School building,

The final design is being completed and the project will be put out to bid shortly. The Marconi

Wireless Receiving Station Site.

The Town of Chatham acquired the Marconi Wireless Receiving Station site ("Marconi Station Site") in 1999. In a separate transaction, the Town acquired 72 acre a parcel adjacent to Forrest Beach in South Chatham. Following that acquisition, the radio tower and several small buildings were removed from the property and the area is now dedicated as open space with modest parking.

The Marconi Station Site consists of three parcels flanked by Old Corners Road and Orleans Road (Route 28). Parcel 1 on Ryder's Cove contains several radio towers and the original power station building for the Receiving Station. Parcel 2 has six buildings, including the old WCC operations center building, a

bachelor living quarters known as the "hotel", and four single family homes. Parcel 3 contains two single family homes. These three parcels comprise a little more than 31 acres. Parcel 1 abuts Ryder's Cove, Parcel 2 Stillwater Pond and Parcel 3 Lovers Lake.

The total purchase price for the 104 acres of land and buildings was \$1.6 Million.

To date, parking for additional vehicles and boat trailers has been added on Parcel 1 and four of the single family homes have been renovated for affordable housing and leased on Parcels 2 and 3. Last December the town was authorized to take measures to stabilize the remaining buildings from further deterioration while their future was being decided.

Because of a prevailing sentiment in maintaining the historic character of the site and the interest expressed by several groups, including the Chatham Marconi Maritime Association and the Cape Hook Fishermen Association, in utilizing the operations center building and the hotel, the town commissioned the Office of Michel Rosenfeld, Architects to study the feasibility and cost of rehabilitating the remaining buildings, as well as the site, for use as an exhibit and educational venue and for association offices and meeting spaces.

The study which was completed last year concluded that the cost of the work, including the rehabilitation of the two remaining single family homes would be just under \$4 Million. (\$368,000 for each of the two houses, \$685, 000 for the operations building, \$1,830,000 for the hotel and \$630,000 for the site improvements, including parking).

Given the Town's other urgent concerns, including replacement of the police and fire stations and implementation of a wastewater management plan, the preference is for those interested in utilizing the operations center building and the hotel to undertake the responsibility for their rehabilitation and lease the buildings from the town. In that regard, a consultant has been hired to develop a Request for Proposal for utilization of the operations center building and the hotel and interested groups will be invited to submit proposals. The invitation process will begin later this year.